

# The Rise and Fall of the Pajama-Boy Nietzscheans

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American Mind

America's ideals are worth defending against two-bit impostors.

*We frequently publish views and criticism of ourselves and others, whether or not we agree with it, if we consider the criticism representative of various factions in American life today. The following is a critique that we and others will be [responding](#) to shortly. We present it here to help further the debate that the American Right needs to have. — Eds.*

The publication of my new book, [America's Revolutionary Mind: A Moral History of the American revolution and the Declaration that Defined It](#), comes at a crucial moment in American history. Academic study of the American revolution is dying on our college campuses, and the principles and institutions of the American Founding are now under assault from the nattering nabobs of both the progressive Left and the reactionary Right. These two ideological antipodes share little in common other than a mutually-assured desire to purge 21st-century American life of the founders' philosophy of classical liberalism.

On this point, the radical Left and Right have merged.

The philosophy of Americanism is, as I have argued in my book and [elsewhere](#), synonymous with the founders' ideas, actions, and institutions. Its core tenets can be summed up as: the moral laws and rights of nature, ethical individualism, self-interest rightly understood, self-rule, constitutionalism, rule of law, limited government, and laissez-faire capitalism.

The founders' Americanism is most identifiably expressed in the leading political documents of the founding era: the Declaration of Independence, which Thomas Jefferson said was an "expression of the American mind," and in the revolutionary state constitutions as well as the federal Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The classical liberalism of the founding era assumed that individual rights to life, liberty, property, and the pursuit of happiness are grounded in nature and that government's primary responsibility is to protect those rights.

This meant that government must be impartial in adjudicating rival conceptions of the good life. That is not to say, however, that the founders' liberal order was not grounded on a robust moral foundation—it was.

The practical implementation of these principles created the freest and wealthiest nation in human history. It also created the most *moral* nation known to man. The

founders' frontier republicanism created a nation of self-owning, self-governing, self-starting, and self-reliant men and women who lived by a rigorous moral code defined by certain uniquely American virtues: rationality, independence, initiative, industriousness, frugality, enterprise, creativity, adventurousness, courage, optimism. America's liberal order was forged when the ideas of Thomas Jefferson passed through the Cumberland Gap and were put into practice by men like Daniel Boone and women like Annie Oakley.

This is precisely why hundreds of millions of immigrants—myself included—have come to this place for over 245 years. This is not flowery or filio-pietistic rhetoric. These are easily demonstrable facts. Those facts have sometimes been messy and ugly, but on the whole the rise of the United States of America may be the world's greatest story of human achievement. There was a time, of course, when most Americans (especially conservatives and libertarians) agreed with this assessment. Sadly, that is no longer true.

The anti-Americanism of the radical Left is well known and long established. Its most recent and most virulent incarnation comes in the form of the *New York Times's* "[1619 Project](#)," which claims that the founders' principles and institutions were disingenuous in 1776 and immoral today.

Much more interesting than the ho-hum anti-Americanism of the progressive Left, though, is the rise in recent years of a rump faction of former Paleo or Tradcons, who have come out of their ideological closet and transitioned from pro- to anti-Americanism. The recent rise of the radical Right in America is distinguished from all previous forms of conservatism and libertarianism by its explicit rejection of the founders' liberalism.

A new generation of neo-reactionary ideologues looks at contemporary America and sees nothing but moral, cultural, and political decay, which they blame on the soullessness of the founders' Americanism. Remarkably, just like the radical Left, the radical Right condemns the philosophy of 18th-century liberalism as untrue and therefore immoral. It is the source, they claim, of all our present discontents.

Much has already been written on the 1619 Project, so I shall only briefly describe its arguments and goals in order to better focus on the aims and tactics of the reactionary Right.

### **The 1619 Canard**

The purpose of the 1619 Project is to "reframe" the narrative of American history from the ground up. Its central claims are fivefold: first, that America's true birth date was not 1776 but 1619, the year that African slaves were allegedly first brought to America; second, that American revolutionaries fought a war of independence in order "to protect the institution of slavery"; third, that America's "founding ideals of liberty and equality were false when they were written"; fourth, that "nearly everything that has made America exceptional" grew out of slavery; and fifth, that American-style capitalism is rooted in slavery and racism.

The conclusion of the 1619 Project is obvious: the United States of America must be judged and condemned as irredeemably racist and therefore evil. It turns out that everything "good" about America is actually bad because everything good about America is grounded in racism and slavery. And what this means, of course, is that all of the wealth enjoyed by some Americans past, present, and future had its unjust origin in force and plunder.

Only by acknowledging this "shameful history" and "its powerful influence on the present" can Americans, according to the *Times's* editorial board, own their collective guilt and thus prepare themselves "for a more just future," by which they mean various

forms of wealth redistribution. The bottom line is: socialism must replace capitalism.

The 1619 Project is revisionist history [at its worst](#). In fact, it's [not history at all](#). It's propaganda. It's [riddled](#) with half-truths, untruths, and self-evident lies about America's founding fathers and the creation of the United States of America. It's fake news doing fake history.

### **America Under Fire**

Whereas the progressive Left has been attacking the principles and institutions of the American Founding in one form or another for over a century (think John Dewey, Woodrow Wilson, Herbert Croly, Charles Beard, et al.), a new generation of so-called "conservatives" or neo-reactionary thinkers has launched an unprecedented and unexpected attack on the founders' principles.

These anti-American neo-reactionaries sometimes self-identify as the dissident or "alt" Right, sometimes as post-liberals, and sometimes even as right-wing nihilists. The reactionary Right is a socially if not intellectually disparate group: some are college professors, some live off the grid, some write under pseudonyms, some tweet, some are YouTubers, some are meme artists, and some are hucksters. Some are high-church Catholics, some are low-church pagans, and some are no-church atheists.

The primary intellectual influences on the reactionary Right include Joseph de Maistre, Louis de Bonald, Georg Friedrich Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche, Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger, Julius Evola, Giovanni Gentile, Leo Strauss, and the Japanese novelist Yukio Mishima. Their political heroes include Charlemagne, the Stuart monarchs, General Franco, and Viktor Orbán.

The reactionary Right does not form a coherent intellectual movement, nor does it share a positive political agenda except for its political authoritarianism. It is united largely by what it is against, i.e., cultural leftism with its promotion of same-sex marriage, transgenderism, feminism, multiculturalism, the sexualization of children, etc.—all of which it blames on the classical liberalism of the American Founding! In what follows, I shall briefly outline the anti-American ideas of five representative ideologues of the reactionary Right: Patrick Deneen, Sohrab Ahmari, Mencius Moldbug (i.e., Curtis Yarvin), Bronze Age Pervert, and Dan DeCarlo.

The best-known member of the reactionary Right is the Notre Dame academic Patrick Deneen, who is the author of *Why Liberalism Failed*—a book devoted to denigrating the principles of the American Founding. Deneen is the Nikole Hannah-Jones of the Right: he despises the principles of 1776 and hopes to replace them with something radically different.

Like the 1619 crowd, Deneen claims that America was founded in sin and that the principles of the American revolution necessarily lead to all of the problems of the modern world. The classical-liberal regime founded in 1776 is, according to Deneen, the source of modern America's banal quest for "instant gratification," "hedonic titillation," and joyless joy.

Deneen's thesis is as simple as it is mistaken: that America's modern "liberal" order is failing precisely because it succeeded in fulfilling its original moral and political telos. According to Deneen, the principles of Enlightenment liberalism (e.g., freedom, equality, rights, individualism, the pursuit of happiness, limited self-government, and free markets) were filtered through the political lymph nodes of the American Founding and then spread as a cultural cancer through the body politic over the course of two centuries. The founders' principles then morphed naturally into postmodern notions of autonomy, choice, viewpoint neutrality, selfishness, tolerance, proceduralism, pluralism,

relativism, materialism, consumerism, hedonism, libertinism, multiculturalism, identitarianism, and, summing it all up in a word, nihilism.

In other words, Ron Paul and Ru Paul liberalism are effectively synonymous. They're kissing cousins, as it were.

The inner logic of the founders' worldview necessarily leads, according to Deneen, to the moral abomination that is modern America—to rainbow parties for middle-schoolers, Drag Queen Storytime, and surgical sex changes for six-year-olds. For Deneen, it's a straight line from the American revolution to the Transgender revolution, from the Declaration of Independence to the Port Huron Statement, from revolutionary Patriots to Antifa, and from July 4th celebrations to twerking "Pride" parades. His hatred of the cultural Left has, ironically, driven him to a hatred of America.

Deneen, of course, has it all backward. The nihilistic, postmodern world in which we live today bears zero causal relationship to the principles of the American Founding. Progressive "liberalism" is not the natural outgrowth of classical liberalism, nor is it even a corruption of the founders' liberalism; it represents a total rejection of the classical-liberal tradition.

Progressive "liberalism" rejects down the line *all* of the principles and institutions of the founders' liberalism—e.g., the moral laws and rights of nature, reason, truth, individualism, constitutionalism, limited government, and laissez-faire capitalism. (For conclusive evidence that Progressivism is the antipode of the founders' liberalism, see the Epilogue ["Has America Lost Its American Mind"] to *America's Revolutionary Mind*.)

Classical and Progressive liberalism are not of the same ideological species. They are natural enemies. The difference between the founders' liberalism and Progressive liberalism is one of kind and not of degree, whereas Deneen's critique of the founders' liberalism actually shares a great deal in common with the Progressive critique of classical liberalism. Like his Progressive and socialist allies, Deneen is opposed to classical liberalism's advocacy of individualism, limited government, and laissez-faire capitalism.

### **Frenchism and its Discontents**

Following Deneen's lead, Sohrab Ahmari, the op-ed editor of the *New York Post* and contributor to the Catholic magazine *First Things*, has likewise launched an unbuttoned attack on the founders' classical-liberal philosophy and its 21st-century defenders. Ahmari wants to rethink "the guiding principles of American conservatism," by which he means the founders' liberalism. The scapegoat for Ahmari's anti-Americanism is the conservative-libertarian writer David French, whom Ahmari attacked in a [widely discussed](#) essay, "[Against David French-ism](#)."

Ahmari accuses French of advocating a freedom philosophy (i.e., market freedom and constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties) that unwittingly supports the progressive Left's notions of autonomy, choice, pluralism, tolerance, and libertinism. In other words, the Declaration's natural right to liberty and the pursuit of happiness necessarily results in the liberation of grown men to dress as bizarrely-costumed women, who then read stories of LGBTQ heroism to young children in public libraries. Ahmari objects to what he views as French's neutered political proceduralism (i.e., a marketplace of ideas governed by neutral rules), which gives to the deviant Left all of the unlimited freedom it needs to corrupt America's children.

Ahmari rejects all this for a semi-free, semi-authoritarian society based on principles, institutions, and virtues very different from those founded in 1788—namely, authority, order, stability, community, social cohesion, continuity, solidarity, sacrifice, duty, law,

orthodoxy, virtue, goodness, and God. He calls for re-ordering and re-politicizing the public square “to the common good and ultimately the Highest Good.”

What that means in practice is that Ahmari favors using and expanding what he calls “public power to advance the common good, including in the realm of public morality.” Ahmari’s public square would not be a marketplace or freak show for influences that corrupt the culture and children in particular. Instead, it would “enforce *our* order and *our* orthodoxy, not pretend that they could ever be neutral.” But it’s not entirely clear who Ahmari’s “we” is and what kind of “order” and “orthodoxy” they favor.

This much I know, however. I feel confident in asserting that Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Samuel and John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Wilson, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton would not appreciate being told how to order their moral lives by Pope Francis and the Vatican’s [lavender mafia](#).

The purpose of government, according to Ahmari, is not to secure men’s unalienable rights as stated in the Declaration of Independence but to make them “good.” Ahmari is not entirely opposed to freedom, but his definition “requires a moral and religious horizon, not just in man’s private sphere, not just at the level of culture and civil society, but also in his collective experience—that is, in the state and the political community.”

Ahmari is therefore willing to use the coercive power of “good” government to regulate Big Tech, “reenact Sunday trading bans,” “guarantee family leave,” and, most of all, “shield children from LGBT indoctrination.” While it *may* be true that Ahmari’s notions of the “common good and the highest good are among the bedrock principles of classical and Christian philosophy,” they are not a part of the American tradition unless you think John Winthrop’s puritan Massachusetts was reborn in 1776 and re-instituted in 1788.

As with Deneen, Ahmari confuses the symptoms for the cause. Much of what he deplores in contemporary American culture may very well be deplorable, but his diagnosis of the disease is entirely wrong and his cure is just a different form of the same malady—that is, the desire of central planners on the Left and Right to impose their vision of the good society on the culture as a whole (witness YouTube’s recent actions in taking down videos that challenge Chinese government propaganda). Both ideologies claim to speak for the “common good” or the “highest good” and both demand the use of State power to control those ideas and actions of which they disapprove.

But, as every high-school libertarian knows, the idea of the “common good” has always served as the moral justification for virtually every form of tyranny throughout history. This is because the idea of a “common” or “highest good” is an undefinable concept, particularly when governments attempt to define it, which is exactly what we’re talking about.

There is *no such thing* as the “common good” unless one means the sum of the interests of *all* men and women in a particular society, and the only legitimate “good” common to all men and women as *rational* beings is freedom, which is the necessary condition from which they pursue all the goods necessary for living and living well. To the extent that the “common good” can mean anything at all, it describes the freedom and rights that all individuals must be guaranteed in a civilized society.

But the standard idea of the “common good” as used by Ahmari is an abstraction that is greater than the sum of the individual men and women who make up a society. Thus the central problem with the anti-concept “common good” is that has no basis in objective reality, which means that it’s literally nothing other than a philosophic fantasy—a creation of the human imagination.

The problem of course, as James Madison explained in [Federalist #10](#), is that men and

women will always pursue competing notions of the common good and they will always seek political power in order to force their vision of the “common good” on society as a whole. This is an inescapable fact of political life. The notion of a “common good” always means the “good” of some men takes precedence over the good of others (*Je suis le bien commun!*), which in turn means that the good of some is to be sacrificed to the good of others. Those who wield coercive state power—which, in the case of the United States, means the majority and its representatives—always define the “common” or “highest” good, and this of course is how the rights of minorities and individuals are violated. The idea of the “common good” has always been the source of the theological-political problem.

This top-down approach of both the radical Left and Right is anathema to the founders’ political vision, which either assumed or explicitly called for some version of a separation between church and state, school and state, economy and state, and culture and state. The philosophy of Americanism demands a free society, which, in turn, demands the strictest and most capacious moral standards.

Deneen and Ahmari, like the Progressive socialists of the early 20th century, seek to tear down the principles and institutions of the Old Republic and to replace them with a Brave New World of government control built on the ruins of the old one. The only meaningful difference between the radical Left and Right is that one is thoroughly totalitarian in nature and the other is authoritarian.

### **Sun, Steel, and Sick Gainz**

Deneen and Ahmari are credentialed members of the academic/media elite, which means that their views are discussed in semi-polite company. Going beyond their anti-Americanism, however, is a growing neo-reactionary movement on the Right, particularly among the young, that has been largely hidden from view in the darker corners of the Internet.

This neoreactionary youth movement comes in many forms, but possibly its most interesting manifestation can be characterized as a kind of Nietzscheanized “right-wing nihilism.” From their parents’ basement apartments, these kiddie reactionaries have been having lots of fun with all of their frog memes, code language, trolling, diets, Alpine hikes, moustaches, pseudonyms, and, best of all, their 175-pound bench presses.

This underground movement was recently mainstreamed, first by the [Claremont Review of Books](#) and then by the *CRB*’s edgier and hipper online sister publication, [The American Mind](#). Last August, the *Claremont Review*, long a bastion of pro-American conservative thought, published a review by Michael Anton of a little-known and self-published book titled *Bronze Age Mindset* (hereafter *BAM*) by the queerly-named Bronze Age Perv (hereafter BAP).

The Perv has vaulted to minor stardom on the reactionary Right, and so Anton thought it important to inform *CRB* readers of this curious phenomenon. Anton is, of course, best known as the author of the much-talked-about 2016 essay, “[The Flight 93 Election](#),” that made Trump and Trumpism palatable to many wavering conservatives. At the time, Anton’s “I’m mad as hell, and I’m not going to take it anymore” argument was on the cutting edge of the conservative intellectual movement. But not, as it turns out, for long.

At the beginning of his review, Anton notes that he was initially inspired to review *BAM* by his friend, Curtis Yarvin (aka Mencius Moldbug), who brought a copy of BAP’s book to a dinner party hosted by Anton in lieu of flowers or wine. Before we turn to Anton’s review of *BAM*, we should pause for a moment and briefly consider the views of the aptly-named Moldbug.

Mr. Mencius Moldbug believes that the American revolution—or what he calls the American “Rebellion”—was a massive mistake, that the 18th-century British Deep State should have crushed the Americans, that “evil triumphed over good,” that the principles of the Declaration of Independence are self-evident lies, and that the American Loyalists and English Tories got it right.

Moldbug goes on to claim that the principles of the American revolution such as “liberty, truth and justice” represent nothing but “thuggery, treason, and—above all—hypocrisy.” (In this criticism, Moldbug joins the Left and the 1619 crowd in denouncing American revolutionaries as hypocrites.) Moldbug is a fan of the Stuart monarchy and the three-year dictatorial rule of Sir Edmund Andros during the late 1680s in the Dominion of New England. You can’t make this stuff up!

That Michael Anton would read and review a self-published book (at Yarvin’s urging) by an author who writes under the juvenile pseudonym Bronze Age Pervert and whose book is written in purposefully ungrammatical English, is a curious if not an extraordinary thing. Anton seems to be a relatively well-educated and thoughtful man, one who takes highbrow political philosophy and culture seriously. Still, he was impressed by the fact that the book has sold tens of thousands of copies and is said to have a devoted following of young men who are disgusted by the cowardice of the establishment Right—a disgust shared by Anton.

Anton’s review of *Bronze Age Mindset*, titled “Are the Kids Al(t)right,” is surprisingly sympathetic, even partially approving (though somewhat befuddled and even nervous in tone). One senses in Anton’s review both genuine awe and horror of BAP’s sometimes outrageous views. He clearly agrees with BAP’s contempt for the fascistic Left and the squishy Right. BAP speaks to an under-30 crowd that has grown up being propagandized by their K-12 teachers and college professors to believe that they are racist, sexist, and homophobic simply by virtue of being white, male, and cis-gendered. BAP’s message is being heard by a generation that has been told since childhood that they are sinners by virtue of their DNA.

BAP explodes all that, and he excoriates the weak-kneed Right for not standing up to defend a generation of young men and women who have suffered indoctrination, censorship, and discrimination for much of their lives. BAP says what many people think but would never say amongst the hoity-toity, the artsy-fartsy, and the namby-pamby. The Perv is done with the politeness and cowardice of Conservatism Inc.

So what does BAP believe?

Anton’s BAP seems to be some strange brew of Alcibiades, Machiavelli, and Nietzsche (with maybe some Herbert Spencer thrown in for spice). Anton notes that BAP’s “Bronze Age” mindset calls for a new form of “vitalism,” one that engages in the “struggle for space” and the mastery of nature, that recognizes and rewards the inequalities amongst men, that calls for the strong to dominate the weak, that praises pirates, conquistadors, and warlords as the highest and freest type of men, that recognizes physical beauty, and that embraces the military state and military rule as the best form of government.

In the end, we learn that the “Bronze Age mindset” is the “secret desire...to be worshipped as a god,” which means that it rejects as false the idea of human equality as understood by America’s founding generation. Indeed, *BAM* is a relentless polemic for inequality and hierarchy, which means that BAP must also reject the principle of individual rights. His view of justice seems reducible to Thrasymachus’s view that “might makes right” and to some kind of caste system. “Ethics” (which includes justice) is in BAP’s view, as in that of Thrasymachus, “for cows.”

There is nothing in *Bronze Age Mindset* that is even remotely in accord with the

founders' liberalism. In his response to Anton published at *The American Mind*, the Perv argues, following Carl Becker's historicist lead, that America's founding principles and institutions are at best irrelevant for the 21st century and at their root untrue. The fact is, BAP declares, the founders' "Americanism is long dead."

Besides, he's just not that into it. In one passing reference in *BAM* that echoes Jeremy Bentham, BAP does indicate what he really thinks of the founders and their extraordinary accomplishments: "the Constitution, the ideology, the doctrine of rights, is all so much nonsense." BAPism represents the antithesis of the founders' liberalism no less than does progressivism.

### **Pandora's Box**

Michael Anton's review of *BAM* is really quite extraordinary. It represents the mainstreaming of views that, like Mr. Rochester's first wife, are probably best left alone to rave in the attic. Still, Anton's conclusion just might be correct: "in the spiritual war for the hearts and minds of the disaffected youth on the right, conservatism is losing, BAPism is winning."

But this is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Unwittingly (no doubt) and rather quite tragically, Michael Anton is the super carrier who brought the virus of the reactionary Right into the bloodstream of the conservative intellectual movement. To be more precise: by giving a platform to BAP and various other BAPsters, the *CRB* and *TAM* appear to have forgotten or abandoned the founders' classical liberalism and sanctioned (at least indirectly) the deviant views of the Pajama-Boy Nietzscheans.

Soon after the *CRB* published its review of *BAM*, *The American Mind* then gave a soapbox to BAP and his epigones to respond to Anton. BAP's response is titled "America's Delusional Elite Is Done," by which he means, at the very least, the weasels, compromisers, mediocrities, and losers of the Republican-conservative-libertarian establishment. In his response to this desiccated conservative establishment, BAP declares himself to be "an unapologetic 'German nihilist' of the old kind."

What is most interesting about the response of BAP and the BAPsters is how mocking and dismissive they were of Anton and his half-hearted defense of the founders' liberalism. The most unbuttoned of the bunch, Dan DeCarlo, [noted](#) that what was most lacking from Anton's review was "genuine criticism" of BAP. DeCarlo wrote that Anton's failure to address BAP's "wild assertions" and criticism of the founding "spoke volumes" and betrayed "a lack of confidence in his own stated positions." Anton's position, which DeCarlo indirectly equates with the founders' principles, is regarded by the latter as "patently absurd" and even "laughable."

If Anton were not sufficiently willing to criticize BAP, DeCarlo certainly does not have that problem. But DeCarlo writes not to defend the principles of the Declaration of Independence from BAP but to go one up on the Perv by condemning the philosophy of Americanism even more stridently. He writes that BAP's rejection of the founders' classical liberalism doesn't go near far enough. He then speaks favorably of an unnamed Harvard professor (presumably Adrian Vermeule) who, echoing the language of Carl Schmitt (the German legal theorist of Nazism), is rumored to speak of "'friends and enemies'" and who "desires to bring not peace, but a sword."

Not only has DeCarlo declared war against the defenders of the founders' liberalism, he has called for their literal destruction. They "*must be destroyed*," he [wrote](#) last year in *Mere Orthodoxy*, by "*whatever means available*." Taking his eliminationist rhetoric to a wholly new level, DeCarlo equates the 21st-century defenders of the founders' liberalism to the "forces of barbarism," who must be "confronted and destroyed, as Charlemagne illustrated when he rendered his edict at Verden."

Just so we're clear: Charlemagne's 782 edict called for and carried out the genocide of 4,500 Saxons who refused to be Christianized. DeCarlo concludes by describing Charlemagne's act as "righteous" and one that "we must all now find the strength to emulate." Let that sink in for a while!

### **A Call to Come Back Home**

So, this is where we are in 2020. Like antebellum Southern slaveholders and post-bellum Progressives, today's radical Left and Right share a common disgust for the principles of the American Founding. Both want to deconstruct the Declaration's "harmonizing sentiments," and they want to end its intellectual hegemony over the American mind. Both camps are destroyers. But whereas the totalitarian Left wants to march forward to a Brave New World of radical egalitarian socialism, the dissident Right wants to return to either the canon and feudal law of the Middle Ages or to the various petty tyrannies of the Bronze Age—or worse.

Reminiscent of the early Weimar Republic, the radical Left and Right are intentionally driving the United States to the point of crisis. To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln with a twist: a nation that hates itself cannot stand. If Americans are taught to hate their "founding" principles and institutions, then it will be much easier for this Left-Right alliance to undermine the economic, political, and religious freedoms in the United States, which is their goal.

*America's Revolutionary Mind* is the antidote to the self-loathing, postmodern prophets of anti-Americanism. I wrote it in order to restore and revivify the self-evident truths of 1776 as living principles for 21st-century America. I defend the founders' principles for one simple reason: they are *true*—objectively, absolutely, permanently, and universally true. *America's Revolutionary Mind* also provides a systematic examination and reconstruction of what I call the founders' philosophy of "Americanism." In other words, the book presents the metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, and political principles employed by America's revolutionary founders when they created the United States. Those principles should still be our star and compass today.

Careful readers of *America's Revolutionary Mind* will no doubt see its kinship with Harry V. Jaffa's *A New Birth of Freedom*. Both volumes explicate and defend the founders' (and Lincoln's) moral and political philosophy as *true*, which means that both books go beyond a mere description of past individuals, ideas, actions and events. *America's Revolutionary Mind* and *A New Birth of Freedom* are more than just studies in the *history* of political philosophy. Each presents a moral-political philosophy that transcends the ideas of their subjects.

Taken together, these two books serve as a compendium—a kind of *Encyclopédie*—of Americanism and the founders' liberalism. While Professor Jaffa and I might have a few minor disagreements about some tertiary issues, we agree, broadly speaking, on the causes, nature, and meaning of the American revolution and the American Founding. Whereas *A New Birth of Freedom* tends to emphasize the theological-political problem and the legacy of Aristotle's thought in the revolutionary-founding era more than does *America's Revolutionary Mind*; and whereas I interpret the relationship between the moral laws and rights of nature in the founders' thought somewhat differently than does Mr. Jaffa, our overall interpretations are largely in sympathy with one another.

Lastly, a word to the young—to those who have been let down or feel abandoned by the cowardice and unmanliness of Conservatism and Libertarianism, Inc.—know this: you have not been abandoned. There is a new generation of intellectuals willing to take up the cause of Americanism.

More to the point, you should know this as well: I will be, to quote William Lloyd Garrison,

as “harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice” when it comes to defending the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. The principles and institutions of the founders’ liberalism are worth defending because they are true. The reactionary Right is a dead end; it’s a dead end because it’s a lie. You should not let your despair turn you to the Dark Side. It’s time to come home.

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